

## South Carolina Department of Insurance

1201 Main St, Suite 1000 Columbia, South Carolina 29201 SCOTT H. RICHARDSON Director of Insurance

MARK SANFORD Governor

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 100105, Columbia, S.C. 29202-3105 Telephone: (803) 737-6130

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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Contact: Ann Roberson Phone: 803-737-6207

## **SC HealthNet Proposal Released**

Today, Scott Richardson, Director of the South Carolina Department of Insurance released a health insurance pilot project initiative, entitled *SC HealthNet*, for consideration by the South Carolina Legislature. "It is no secret that affordability is one of the key reasons for poor participation in the health insurance arena across the U.S.," said Director Richardson.

SC HealthNet is a pilot project. The initiative proposes the establishment of a board that will develop health insurance plans. All insurers writing health insurance coverage in the state will be required to offer the plans. Rates for the plans will be established by the Board and are required to be actuarially sound.

The benefits included in these plans will differ from those provided in the current statutory basic and standard health insurance plans. Many South Carolinians are not interested in the minimum benefits offered by those plans; consequently, they are not routinely purchased. *SC HealthNet* is designed to provide a benefit plan with "medium" benefits for employees of businesses in South Carolina.

The concept for *SC HealthNet* was developed in consultation with members of the South Carolina Association of Health Underwriters as well as insurers writing health insurance in this state. Funding for the program will not involve tax dollars, but will come from grants, public-private partnerships with Medicaid or other programs, and premiums. These plans are designed to be unique and will hopefully expand access to health insurance coverage by providing the public with insurers and options which they may not have today. South Carolinians should be able to access them through their employment.

"The mission of the *SC HealthNet* is to introduce a state program distributed through private carriers, which will make basic health insurance truly affordable! In addition, the program will apply for the necessary waivers so that the state can leverage Medicaid funding to expand coverage to the uninsured. We hope this will help South Carolina dramatically reduce the number of uninsured in this state. The ultimate goal of this pilot project is to improve access to healthcare for all of our citizens; and, if successful, it will put South Carolina at the forefront of solving its health insurance crisis," said Director Richardson.

For questions concerning the information contained in this Advisory, please contact Ann Roberson, Public Information Officer, 803-737-6207.